ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

MR. JOSEPH BEARD

by

Elizabeth Pryor

on

23 January 1979

TAPE # 71

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PRYOR: This is an interview between Elizabeth Pryor and Joseph Beard on Tuesday, January 23, 1979. (Tape running but no sound) interval Do you think they'd be willing to talk to people about _____ _____?

BEARD: Two or three of them already have.

PRYOR: Are these the people Mrs. Netherton interviewed.

BEARD: Yes. John Littleton and Mrs. Arnold Greer, Mrs. Virginia Greer. She is John Littleton's sister. One's 82 and one's 84. But those people, there aren't too many of them left.

PRYOR: We definitely should talk to them while we have the chance to do it.

BEARD: I guess we interviewed three of them. The other two I don't think we have. One of them is in the hospital right now. I don't know what that situation is going to be. I live here in the city of Fairfax, but I still go to church in Herndon just like I did when I was a child.

PRYOR: So you're in touch with them.

BEARD: So I've been able fotunately to keep in touch with those families all along.

PRYOR: I read so many of the interviews that Nan did with you and so I feel like I know you somehow already even before meeting you. Some of the things I wanted to ask you about today were some of the social relationships in the _____. Not only social events but how people interacted. For instance, in a small community like Floris was there some sort of stratification in society? Did the richer farmers not associate with poor farmers or was it a small enough community that everybody really.....

BEARD: It was a small enough community that everyone knew everyone else, and they interchanged work habits with each other in the farming operations

BEARD: like when you got ready to fill the silo or thresh wheat or even raise a barn and those kind of things. There was a considerable amount of that went along. Now about the only different strata in the society was that there were perhaps three, the blacks and the whites didn't interact except in case of hiring or a hired man-farmer relationship. Then there were a few ne'er-do-wells in the neighborhood, alcoholics and one or two dope addicts and that type of thing, that the adults may have had relationships with as far as hiring to work on something, but not on a social status. But not too much of that. In other words, most everyone was pretty much on the same social status and most anything that took place in the neighborhood was pretty much a neighborhood affair. Church socials. They made their own social activities, created their own social activities.

PRYOR: You mentioned the barn raising. I think of an old fashioned barn raising as something where people would bring food, and it would become a social occasion for the workers.

BEARD: No, not to that extent. Our barn raising would be that you would hire a part-time farmer, part-time carpenter to come in and bring two or three others along. Some of these things were done on a contracting basis just the same as you do a contractor today. In a place like Herndon, which was a town or village where most of the trade was conducted locally, there would be one or two contractors there. For instance, the little church that my mother and father were married in was built by a man named Ed Gillette, and Ed Gillette was a contractor. He built that church, I think, for $1200.00. Mother and Dad were married in it in December of 1906. That was the first event that took place in this little church the first time it was opened. It wasn't even finished completely. When they got married everybody in the neighborhood came to the wedding. Then later

BEARD: on as I was brought up as a child in that neighborhood you had Ice Cream Festivals. Then if you read the records that the Farmers Clubs had, about twice a year the Farmers Clubs had a special oyster dinner. Somebody would go down to near Washington or Alexandria and get a couple of gallons of oysters. The records show that he was reimbursed $2.67 for oysters for the Oyster Dinner or something, to this effect you see. I remember going to oyster suppers. In those days we only ate oysters in a month that had "r" in it. We thought they'd be poison if you ate them any other time of the year. They had oyster suppers in the middle of the winter. When I was only six or seven years old I remember going to one of those oyster suppers when everybody came. They didn't have much cash in those days. The amount of money that was available was pretty limited. The way they raised money for a church or a school or any project in the neighborhood was usually done by a supper. They would charge, I don't know what you'd charge, say five cents apiece I suspect, which was a big deal for a meal. They'd hold these in someone's home. They didn't have to go to a schoolhouse or a place like that to hold them in the early days. Later on as the schools began to develop and get away from the one room school, where you had one teacher who taught everything from a-b-c's to algebra in one room.... I went through what we called the primer grade, before you had first, second, third or fourth, in McGuffy Readers. The school teachers taught everything, just one school teacher to a community or neighborhood. Later on as they got two room schools, and then finally they got two year highschools and they had several teachers in a neighborhood, why then you got places you could go in the school and hold these events.

PRYOR: At an oyster supper like that how did they serve the oysters? Would they have them in lots of different ways or just raw?

BEARD: As far as I know oysters have only been served two different ways. One

BEARD: of them is fried oysters and the other is oyster soup. There are a few of them that like oyster soup, more the ladies. Usually the women were more inclined to have oyster soup, and the men were more inclined to have fried oysters. Now there always were a few who didn't like oysters, and they always had ham for those. This developed into the ham and oyster dinner.

PRYOR: So it became a real set thing, ham and oysters?

BEARD: It gradually involved that.

PRYOR: Would people bring other food also? Did the ladies bring cakes?

BEARD: Anything that you would have in a farming neighborhood like that, when you sat down to eat it was just like having a Thanksgiving dinner. Everything from sweet potatoes to scalloped potatoes to macaroni and cheese to string beans to corn on the cob to tomatoes. Most anything that could be raised or produced in a vegetable garden or in a truck patch they'd bring. Then we had custard pies and lemon pies and apple pies. They were pretty much the three standards. You can take a piece of apple pie and it was pretty much standard just like a ham sandwich was. There were three things my father never ate. One was bananas, and one was peanuts, and another was oysters. Never in my life did I ever see him touch any one of those three things. He was raised back in the mountains near Goshen Pass in Rockbridge County, and I guess they didn't have peanuts and bananas back there. He was in his late thirties before he even married, and he wasn't about to take on anything like that afterwards. You know people knew each other well enough, other men's wives, they knew what people liked and what they didn't like even down to the individual person..

PRYOR: Who was the best cook in the Floris area, say in the late 1930's. Can you think of one person?

BEARD: They were all pretty well trained in this section. I don't think that I could single out any one particular person that was a better cook than some of the others.

PRYOR: You mentioned weddings, too, being social occasions. Were those along with church activities some of the big...?

BEARD: There isn't anybody getting married unless it's in a church. There'd be something wrong with you if it wasn't.

PRYOR: But everybody would come to a wedding? It would be a major kind of social occasion?

BEARD: Oh, yes. Then they serenaded people in those days, too. Such a thing as getting anything that would make a noise in the middle of the night and run around the house and clanged it and banged it and so forth. Cow bells.

PRYOR: This was after they were married?

BEARD: Oh, yes, if you could find them.

PRYOR: Did people try to hide so they wouldn't find them?

BEARD: Sure. Didn't anybody want to put up with that anyhow. I spent the first hour of my married life in a chicken house. Everybody was looking all around the house for us, and they never thought to come out there and find us.

PRYOR: And they never found you?

BEARD: No. No, they didn't. We stayed there until they all left.

PRYOR: How smart. How did other people outsmart them?

BEARD: Well, of course, we're talking about two different generations here. My mother and father were in the generation of the early 1900's. You're talking about me, it was in the thirties. In my day we had automobiles. The idea was to take your automobile and hide it somewhere and disguise yourself in some way and get to your car and get away before somebody decorated your automobile with old shoes and tin cans and all kinds of

BEARD: signs. In my mother and father's day it was horse and buggy, so there wasn't much of an opportunity of hiding around and getting out of the neighborhood. In fact they never left the neighborhood. They just stayed there.

PRYOR: Honeymoons were not in fashion.

BEARD: Well they may have been for people who were in the urban areas and in the cities, but not out there in that local community. That's not completely true. The one thing that I can remember more than anything else was Niagara Falls. If they went anyplace, that was the place they were supposed to go, Niagara Falls, New York.

PRYOR: What about the farmers' relationship with the townspeople then in Herndon? Did they mix socially with them very much?

BEARD: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact they intermarried. You can take the Middletons' mother was a Detweiler, and the Harris' mother was a Detweiler, and the principal of the school was a Detweiler, three sisters. The doctor in Herndon was a Detweiler. The dentist in Herndon was a Detweiler, a brother of these three sisters. Then you had the Elmores, one of whom married a Middleton. The Middletons were related to the Detweilers. Then the Bradleys married a Middleton, so the Bradleys were related to the Detweilers. Then I said before that the Harrisons, there were three brothers of the Harrisons that had families, but one of the Harrisons married a Detweiler. So all of them were cousins to a large extent, the old timers. However in this period there was an immigration of farmers from other parts of the country, particularly up in the Valley of Virginia, who did not have an opportunity to market their farm products and their livestock very readily up there in the Valley. A lot of those people looking for markets, where they could have ready access to Washington, D.C., Alexandria and even Philadelphia and Baltimore, moved

BEARD: into this section of the country beginning in 1900 and on up until World War I. They did this so they could have the Washington and Old Dominion Railway, and they had the Southern Railway, and they had the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac. This was quite an asset to people who wanted to market their farm products, so a lot of them moved up here. That's how my people got here. One family came from Lexington, and the other one came from near Harrisonburg or Staunton. They didn't know each other until they came here, and they arrived about the same time and happened to form the nucleus of a little Presbyterian church. This is how my group came into being. The people who were already here were generally old hard shelled Baptists and Methodists. We had a few Congregationalists, but the Congregationalists came from the northern sections like New York and Canada and places like this. They had a little nucleus of Congregationalists. If you had a funeral or a wedding, people would cross over the lines as far as these little church groups were concerned. It was a neighborhood type of thing.

PRYOR: So people didn't associate just with the people in their own church? Maybe they had more social activities.

BEARD: No, in the neighborhood I lived in there were two churches, there were three. There was this little Presbyterian church, and it had 35 or 40 members. There was a Methodist church that probably had 60 or so members, and there was an old hard shelled Baptist church, which was old Frying Pan Church, which still stands up there. The old hard shelled Baptist people generally were older persons. Very few young people were involved in that. So the young people congregated together in the neighborhood, and if the Methodists had anything, everybody went, regardless of whether you were a Presbyterian or something else. And if the Presbyterians had anything, everybody went. We took good care

BEARD: to see that our Christmas programs: one would be Christmas Eve and it had been for years and years and years, and one would be some other date in the Christmas holidays, and that had been for years and years. We had to have them on different nights so that Santa Claus could appear. He couldn't be two places at the same time. Furthermore they exchanged help when somebody needed extra help in hauling projects. If he got a carload of lime or fertilizer, and he only had forty-eight hours to get it off the track, why neighbors would come over with their teams and horses and help haul your lime. If he needed help you'd go and get his. There wasn't any money exchanged, they just exchanged borrowed help like that. Sometimes they settled up, but not much. Then it seemed to me that there was a great deal more neighborliness involved in a way. If somebody got sick and couldn't milk his cows, why the neighbors would go over and help him milk the cows. When you have dairy cows, which many of them had, that's a 365 day proposition regardless of whether you're sick or anything like that. I remember during World War I when we had the flu and a lot of people died. Everybody in the neighborhood that was well enough to do anything not only did his work but went over and fed his neighbors' livestock. I remember the neighbor next door to me had the flu, and everybody thought he was going to die and the snow was about twenty inches deep. They placed this man on a stretcher and put him in a wagon and wrapped him up in blankets and hauled him in a farm wagon to the railroad station out at Sterling and put him on the train and shipped him to a Washington hospital. There was a wife left there with three tiny small children, not of school age. My father not only did our work, but he went over and did their work, too.

PRYOR: Do you think that neighborliness changed any when more people moved in?

BEARD: Oh, yes. And another thing, nobody ever took anybody's....you didn't have vandalism and that type of thing either.

PRYOR: That started also when people moved in from Washington?

BEARD: It didn't necessarily because they moved in from Washington, because you had more tolerance to that type of thing. If anybody did anything like that when we were youngsters, you'd end up in jail and you'd stay there, too. You didn't have the young people's programs and that type of thing. Furthermore I think there was a different attitude in families in that everybody was busy. We didn't have any unemployment.

PRYOR: Everybody had work to do on the farm?

BEARD: Yes.

PRYOR: When people started moving out from Washington was there much social interaction between families that had lived there for a long time and the newcomers, or were they resented do you think in any way?

BEARD: I have to assume from your question that you thought they mixed in, the people who came out from Washington, subdivisions, mixed in among the farmers. That wasn't necessarily true. Most of the people, when they started coming out of Washington or whatever other source they came from, came into a new...let's take a two hundred acre farm. You can take a two hundred acre farm and subdivide it, and you lose one hundred acres of it in streets, churchgrounds, schoolgrounds, roads and utilities and so forth. You have one hundred acres left. So you have one hundred one acre building lots. If you move one hundred families in, they have all their social activities and everything like that to themselves, and in that particular neighborhood there wasn't much intercourse and social acceptance by the farmers around. A farmer was always busy, and those kids would run the streets. That didn't work. That wasn't exactly acceptable.

PRYOR: If a family moved into a farming community, not a subdivision, and worked in Washington?

BEARD: They were accepted just the same as anybody else.

PRYOR: Did a lot of them continue to farm, maybe have a job in Washington and have a small farm also, maybe a vegetable patch or something like that?

BEARD: Close to the railroad, yes. You have to remember that the Washington and Old Dominion Railway started in Georgetown and came across the bridge there to Roslyn and went from there up through Arlington County and into Falls Church and then into Vienna, from Vienna to Herndon, from Herndon to Sterling, from Sterling to Ashland, from Ashland to Leesburg, to Round Hill all the way to the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. There, closer in to Washington, particularly from Herndon on down into Washington, this type of thing developed, where somebody would buy one or two acres or maybe three acres, and he may have a great big raspberry patch or a great big strawberry patch, or he might have had half of it in apple trees and plums and pears and that type of thing. Another one could have a large chicken house (and by the way, on an acre you can keep a thousand hens if you are so inclined),and the wife and children could look after the thousand hens while the man or breadwinner was working in Washington. He would take a basketful of those fresh eggs in to Washington every morning and distribute them among his co-workers. There was a lot of that done where you had close access to the rails. But if you got as far as four or five miles from that point, where you had to maintain an extra horse and a wagon and you couldn't commute. In other words if you couldn't walk to the railroad track, then there wasn't so much of this that took place.

PRYOR: You mentioned that there was less vandalism, less juvenile delinquency that took place. It occurs to me that maybe in a community like this there was more social mixing of young people with older people also.

PRYOR: You didn't have such a segregated situation where you have the young people with their own activities. You had families that did things together and young and old people in social situations. Do you think that's true or did the young people have their own activities and didn't mix?

BEARD: No, there was more attention to doing things with the family. I don't remember going to Ice Cream Socials or affairs at school or church or community hall without the family going along. It was pretty much a family affair. I don't mean to say that after you got up into the late teens or twenties they didn't have parties and social affairs among themselves. I mean what we call today a teen-ager, which would be up to highschool age, they pretty much did things with the family. I remember when my father joined the Farmers Club the whole family went. We played or had social activities with the other children. For instance, while the farmers were having their meeting and the womenfolks were inside preparing the meal (by the way they had their social activities while they were preparing that meal), we youngsters would get three or four watermelons and go out in the pasture or down the road somewhere and have a watermelon feast. Sometimes we'd go swimming. Where? In the streams. Horsepen Run went all the way down to the Potomac River.

PRYOR: Did the boys and girls swim together?

BEARD: Sure. It was family. It didn't make any difference whether you were a boy or girl.. It was pretty much of a family affair. Then again everyone pretty much knew everyone. If there were any strangers in the neighborhood, they would be there just a day or two before people in the neighborhood would go over to see them and invite them and tell them they'd be glad to have them come to the neighborhood. They'd say, "Now I go to this church," or "We're going to have something soon and

BEARD: would be glad to have you come along." Now my family was Presbyterian. I remember a family that moved into the neighborhood and the man was going down to the store one day with his buggy when Dad was out getting the mail at the mailbox. I was a child, and I can remember my Dad said, "Now I want to tell you we have church service here every Sunday, and we'd be very glad to have you and your family attend." This man said, "Well, you know I'm a RomanCatholic." My Dad said, "It doesn't make any difference what you are, we'd still like to have you come if you can." This was a general attitude. Now I don't want to say to you everybody went to church, because there wasn't a higher percentage of people going to church in those days than there is today I don't suspect. I don't really know what percentage of people go to church today on a regular basis. Maybe forty per cent. But that didn't exclude you from the church socials just because you didn't go to all the church activities.

PRYOR: You mentioned Christmas Eve activities at the churches. Can you describe one?

BEARD: Yes. They always had the little people from what you consider the primary grades on up to sixth or seventh grade age recite some little poem or some little story or something of this kind. You nearly always had a chorus or choir, small, of people in the neighborhood that would sing Christmas carols. You always had a minister who read or recited the Christmas story from a Bible. Then you always had Santa Claus come in. Oh, and we always had a Christmas tree. The Christmas tree would be one that was gotten from the neighborhood and was put in the church. The churches were lighted with oil lamps, and they would put candles on this Christmas tree, wax candles, and they would light those wax candles and then blow out the lights. It's a wonder we never set the church on fire. I've never known of a case where we did, but today the fire

BEARD: people just wouldn't permit such a thing. But there would be this beautiful tree with all these lights on it, and hidden down under the tree somewhere would be a great big crate of oranges. Santa Claus usually came in, and when he came in he would ring sleigh bells and walk down through the aisle and make some kind of remark. He would have a sack on his back. This always had tiny little sacks of candy. They started with the smallest children and gave each of them one orange and one sack of hard candy. They went on up the line as far as the oranges and the candy lasted. If you didn't have a crowd even the adults would get a sack of candy and an orange, but if you had a large crowd, why it stopped at whatever age it ran out along up the line. This was an affair at which the program would probably take an hour, an hour and fifteen minutes. But it was cold in there, you know. People would sit in there, and they'd have a great big, old pot bellied stove, but that was in one place in the church. Everybody couldn't sit around that stove, so you sat there in your overcoats sometimes.

PRYOR: Who decorated the tree?

BEARD: All the young.....

END OF SIDE ONE

BEARD: Usually some adult cut the tree and hauled it up there in a wagon with his team of horses and just left it hanging outside the church. Most of the people who decorated the church would be the neighborhood young people, sixteen I might say in some instances, on up to twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, whatever the neighborhood gang was.

PRYOR: Where else besides functions like this did young people meet? Did people date the way we think of it today?

BEARD: Yes, but they always went to some function.

PRYOR: They didn't go off by themselves, to Washington say?

BEARD: No. You know most young schoolteachers date, and in those days most of the schoolteachers were girls. Schoolteachers used to board at my home. I went through a one room school from the beginning of my school through the sixth grade. I started school in 1914. There were no motels, no inns, no nothing, just the school itself right out in the middle of a field. It was three and a half, four miles from the railroad station. The schoolteacher who came in always had to board at one of the homes in the neighborhood. I remember young men would come to see this girl. We always had what we called a living room and then we had a parlor. When he was coming then (I don't know how they ever found out he was coming) we would build a fire in the stove and let them sit in there and do whatever they wanted to do or talk or whatever they did. I don't know. We ran a dairy farm, so my father and mother got up at four o'clock every morning and they got the children up at six. It didn't make any difference how small they were, they got up at six o'clock. So we always got up early in the morning, and we would just go to bed and let them stay in there. As I see it today this fellow must have thought quite a bit of this gal to go that far, because he would ride almost twelve miles to see that gal. Then he'd ride back. Well, twelve miles is a twenty-four mile trip, riding horseback.

PRYOR: How long did that take on a horse? Twelve miles?

BEARD: About an hour and a half, two hours.

PRYOR: A good way to come.

BEARD: Well, I have a daughter at Virginia Polytechnic Institute now. That's about as far away as you can get in the state of Virginia and still be in Virginia. Then we have the University of Virginia and we have William and Mary. Up on the V.P.I. campus there happens to be 18,000 students, but they've got 12,000 automobiles. Those kids get in those

BEARD: doggone cars and run all the way to the University of Virginia or Mary Baldwin College or to the University of Richmond or, in some cases, all the way to William and Mary for dates. So you see it's always been done and I guess it always will be.

PRYOR: I want to get back to weddings for a minute, too. When you had a wedding reception (I assume that they had a reception after a wedding or a party of some sort), did people bring food? They weren't catered like they are?

BEARD: No, no such thing as catered. Everybody in the neighborhood joined in and brought what they could. Somebody, of course, was always in charge of it to call up and say "You bring pumpkin pie or you bring apple pie." Then it was no trouble for anybody to bring a ham, because we always had our own hams. It was no trouble to bring chicken if you wanted to, because everybody had their own chickens. They were put there for use, they weren't put there for commercial purposes at all. Then we had pickles, beet pickles and chopped pickles, and we would have cookies. The thing we call hors d'oeuvres today in those days consisted of cookies and pickles and peanuts and popcorn.

PRYOR: Did people grow the peanuts and popcorn?

BEARD: We didn't grow the peanuts, but we grew the popcorn.

PRYOR: People would plant how much, say, on a small farm?

BEARD: Popcorn? Well, we'd have a vegetable garden, a ~~vegetable~~ garden/or a truck patch, maybe two to four rows across that patch. Those rows would be maybe four hundred feet long, four of them (four times four), about a thousand foot of growth space. That's all you needed. I can tell you it doesn't take much popcorn to make a whole lot of corn. Then I forgot to say on the Christmas decorations that we used white thread, and we popped popcorn and made feet and almost miles of strung popcorn on thread and put that around the Christmas tree to decorate the thing.

PRYOR: I've strung popcorn. I know that's a lot of work when you make that much.

BEARD: We got telephones early in those days. I can't remember when we didn't have a telephone. It didn't work all the time. It was strung on trees, just old poles up and down the road, but we did have telephones. It was always a party line. If you didn't know what was going on in the neighborhood, all you had to do was ask the telephone operator. She knew everything. You depended on her when you were in trouble, too. You didn't call up anybody if your house was on fire: you just called the telephone operator, and she took care of it. If you needed a doctor, and you couldn't get the doctor, you just left a message with her and she'd get it to him.

PRYOR: Where did she work?

BEARD: In her own house. In her own bedroom. The telephone and everything was right in where she slept.

PRYOR: At a wedding would they dance also?

BEARD: No..

PRYOR: It was just a dinner?

BEARD: Well, I say no, but as I see it there wasn't room enough in one of these rooms with a whole lot of people in it to do any dancing much. I don't remember ever dancing at a wedding. They played games like Spin the Bottle and Upset the Fruit Basket.

PRYOR: How do you play that?

BEARD: How do you play Upset the Fruit Basket? Well you have all the chairs sitting around in a room like this, and there's one chair less than there are people. You have an old phonograph record, or maybe you just sing, just have some person sing or something like that. Everybody gets up and walks around all of a sudden they stop. When they stop you're supposed to sit down. Well somebody isn't going to get a chair or they

BEARD: sit on somebody else's lap. If there's a gal that wants to sit on a certain boy's lap, maybe she kind of slows down when she came to that place. It had its advantages. Spin the Bottle. Everybody sat in a circle, and you got a long necked bottle like a Coca Cola bottle. Of course, they didn't have any Coca Cola bottles in those days, they had whiskey bottles, _____ jug. And you'd spin it like that. It would go around the circle and it would stop and it would point toward somebody. Well you had to kiss that person.

PRYOR: How did you get to spin the bottle? If it pointed at you, did you spin it the next time.

BEARD: I guess the one that got kissed was the one who had to spin the bottle next time, or maybe they counted off. But you know you would call this stuff gossip today, but when these people got together they talked about themselves and they talked about the neighbors. They exchanged views on different kinds of subjects. They'd tell jokes, they'd tell yarns, they'd recall something that happened and so forth. You see I had three (sic) grandfathers who were in the Civil War. We call it the War Between the States now. My great grandfather and his son were both in it. My father's father and his two brothers were in it. In fact anybody in the 1860's that was able to walk was in it before it was over. These fellows would get around and talk about their experiences. When you were a small child, the stories they would tell and the folklore and one thing and another was quite interesting.. They'd repeat it two or three times so you finally got the story, and these stories were passed around. Then we'd talk about people there in the neighborhood. When they had these Farmers Clubs, they'd usually try to get two or three of the farmers (they announced a month in advance what the topic was

BEARD: going to be next month, and they'd appoint a committee of one or more farmers to study that and read about it and then come back and report to the rest of them on what went on). Sometimes they'd have a speaker come in. We seemed to enjoy just visiting. Womenfolks get bored now, and they have to go out and get a job, in addition to the money they receive. In those days nobody had any money anyway much. As a general rule the mother of the home or whoever the head female was in the home, because the aunts and uncles and grandparents lived with you in those days, they had the chickens and the turkeys. The chickens and the turkeys ate the grain that was produced on the farm, like corn, wheat and oats and those types of things. The farmer used it for his pigs and sheep and cattle. The chickens always got whatever they needed. All the eggs that were produced were eaten in the home or sometimes sold, too. Eggs could be shipped to Washington, D.C. We had packing crates you could put as lit-- tle as two dozen eggs in or as many as thirty dozen, different size crates.. You'd take it to Herndon or to Sterling and put it on the express, and it would be shipped to a commission merchant in Washington. They would send you a check for your produce. Then we had these hucksters. We had two different types: we had the pedlars who came through and sold you things, then we had the hucksters who came through and bought turkeys, chickens, butter and that type of thing. The womenfolks got this money from the turkeys and chickens and so forth for their housekeeping money. That's about the only income that they had that I know of. Of course, they had their families to talk about and their children and one thing and another. It seemed to me there was a great deal more exxchange of verbal conversation between people. If they got lonesome, or for some reason they thought the person in the next house up the road was lonesome, they'd just put on their bonnet and go up and visit them.

PRYOR: When they talked about other people, what things were status things? When nobody has much money, was it when you raised the best crop or if you were the best cook or if you raised the nicest flower garden? What things made for high status in the community?

BEARD: Sometimes a person would be noted for her cooking, others would be noted for their sewing, tailoring. I would suspect that having a big family was possibly status.. We had come out of the age where a large family was an asset because you had labor. I would say food and homemaking, the one that was considered the best homemaker. You don't consider it a profession, but it was a goal. Then I think maybe that the standard of living had something to do with this. There are some people who have very little money, but have the ability to use it in the right place at the right time and get a great deal more out of it than others. I suspect that the person that had the highest standard of living with what they had to do with was respected more than any one thing.

PRYOR: What about among the men? The same kind of thing?

BEARD: To a large degree, yes.

PRYOR: It wouldn't be who had the largest herd of cattle, but who did the most with what they had made?

BEARD: I suspect that who had the best herd of cattle and that type of thing had a great deal to do with the status of the people. If a person had an outstanding herd of cattle, that meant that other neighbors went in and got some of his cattle for their breeding stock, foundation breeding stock as we called it. I remember a neighbor that went somewhere and bought a number of brood sows, because they were so much better than he had. He got four or five of them, fed them exceedingly well, and they only produced three or four pigs apiece, when the normal litter should have been seven, eight or nine pigs per litter. He treated them too well. He

BEARD: had them so fat that they produced a lot of fat rather than pigs. We had one man that was looked up to around the neighborhood because he raised the best horses and mules. We had another one because he had the best dairy cows. I'm sure that if you excelled in something that you were looked up to.

PRYOR: What about groupings that were out of the main stream other than the blacks, the few people that were alcoholics or that were outside the society? How were they treated? Did people ignore them?

BEARD: With men it didn't seem to make any difference, but womenfolk and families ignored them pretty much and didn't want to see them come around. I remember a man when I was a child, and he had a wife and two of the nicest little girls you ever saw, but he was an alcoholic. Well in those days he'd get on a horse and run up and down the road and cuss and holler and scream and yell and get into fights and come in your house with blood streaming down his head all over him. Of course, my mom would run and shut the door. He would come and knock on the door, and even though he knew there was somebody in the house, she wouldn't answer. To whatever extent we could we would ostracize them, but they would always be coming around anyway. During World War II one fellow got out of the military, and there were a whole lot of alcoholics that came back from (Not World War II, World War I) World War I just like there were a whole lot that come back from any war. I've been through two wars and I know what you see. He would go to Herndon. He had a farm. He raised ponies. He had a lot of money, didn't have to make a living. His family was fairly wealthy compared to the rest of ours. They bought him a farm. He had a wife and two or three nice little kids, but he was an alcoholic. He would get on a binge and go to Herndon. He was the nicest fellow you ever saw when he wasn't drunk, but when he got drunk he always tried to get in a fight

BEARD: with somebody. My father's sister married a fellow who ran a little country store. I can remember as a small child he came back from Herndon one night and somebody hit him in the head with an axe handle, and it just cut a streak across his forehead like that and he bled all down over his face and down through his arm and there was dried blood. He came in this little country store on the way home and he saw me in there and told my mom he was going to buy me some candy, and he put his arm around me. He like to scared me to death. Now I can't say to you that we ever had anybody molested by one of those people. No such thing as rape or what we talk about today. I never heard of it. If it had been, he'd have been lynched. There was one attempted rape or person in Herndon accused of rape and he was just taken out and hanged. They just didn't tolerate this kind of thing. This man may have been innocent as you look back on it now, but they thought he did it and they got rid of him right then. And they would get rid of anybody who molested anyone. They just wouldn't put up with that. It just wasn't tolerated that's all.

PRYOR: And the community took care of that. They didn't wait for the state or the district?

BEARD: No indeed. The neighborhood took care of it right then.

PRYOR: And no other people that you can think of were really outside this community, for instance the professional people such as doctors, veterinarians?

BEARD: No, doctors were almost just like a member, almost like the rest of us. Old Doctor Russell who performed when I was born had been a surgeon in the War Between the States. Everybody just loved him and looked up to him. Of course, you believed everything a doctor told you in those days.. Then we had Will Robey. He was a medical doctor when I was a

BEARD: child. We had Doctor Jones, not all three of them at the same time, but in succession one right after the other over a period. We thought of a family doctor about like we did our minister.

PRYOR: Who were the local vets?

BEARD: We had a man named Doctor Poolewho lived in Herndon, was a local vet. Then we had a dairy inspector, who was hired by the D.C. Health Department and who visited our farms three or four times a year and inspected all of our animals when we were shipping milk. He was Doctor Harry Drake. Doctor Drake lived up in Loudoun County but inspected the farms in Fairfax. He became a neighborhood fixture, too, because he'd drive down here from Loudoun County and inspect two or three dairy farms. He'd always eat his dinner with one of the families he was inspecting. When anybody came around to your farm in those days, when dinnertime came, you'd say, "Well, it's time for dinner. Let's go eat." It didn't seem to matter if you had somebody drop in on you on short notice. Women, ladies, mothers, wives were accustomed to this kind of thing. It never seemed to upset them. They just took it in stride. They put on another plate and said, "We haven't got much, but you're welcome to what we have." They'd go on like this. They would bring out the best they could find. That was the kind of condition that prevailed.

PRYOR: Are any of the vets that were around at that period still alive?

BEARD: No. That's been fifty years ago. Doctor Poole is dead. Dr. Drake had a son named Doctor Eugene Drake and Eugene Drake succeeded his father for thirty years or more. Eugene Drake had a pair of twin boys, but I don't think either of the twin boys became a veterinarian. Then Dr. C.L. Kronfeld came to Herndon shortly after World War I and Kronfeld had two sons and both of them were veterinarians. Now Kronfeld's oldest son is still in Herndon and you might find out something from

BEARD: him. Turner Kronfeld. Turner was a boy who was raised in Herndon and his father was a veterinarian before him. He's the best one I know of. Neither of Doctor Poole's sons became veterinarians.

PRYOR: Did people use the vets much or were they reluctant to pay the money?

BEARD: No, we used the vets quite frequently.

PRYOR: Was there any conflict between you? I noticed in some of your reports that I read that you carried medicine with you and often treated poultry and that sort of thing.

BEARD: Well, I worked for four years before I came back to Fairfax in a county called Middlesex. Middlesex didn't have a veterinarian within fifty-five miles and I did the veterinary work, even though I wasn't a practicing veterinarian and couldn't accept any fees or anything of this kind. I took about enough work in college to give me a pre-med. I was offered a scholarship to go to Ames and become a veterinarian, which I would have done if I hadn't owed so much money when I got through. I took enough veterinary courses to know something about it, but not enough to be a practicing veterinarian. A County Agricultural Agent is coached in sanitation and in disease prevention all the time. We are brought into State College and given short courses by veterinarians the same as we are with soils and the same as we are with economics and the same as we are with any subject that happens to rural people were discussed. A County Agent knows a little about a lot of things, but is not a specialist in anything. We continually study. We have to practice sanitation and disease control and that kind of thing in our programs.

PRYOR: Would people wait until the last moment to call the vet or would they call them pretty promptly? Were they interested in preventing?

BEARD: They weren't interested in preventing: they were interested in the cure.

PRYOR: So they'd wait until they had a sick animal?

BEARD: They'd wait until they had a sick animal before they'd call the veterinarian.

PRYOR: And how much would a vet's fees be?

BEARD: In those days? Two and a half dollars.

PRYOR: And he'd come out there?

BEARD: Oh, yes. Same as a medical doctor. He'd come out there and bring his own medicine kit. Whatever you needed to perform any medication, he would leave with you while he was there.

PRYOR: So that the farmer himself could follow up.

BEARD: Yes, but the farmers in what I expect was fifty per cent of the cases lost the animal anyway after the vet got there, because so many times instead of having preventive medicine and the things you suggested mostly they never called him until things were in very bad shape. I suspect that the vet would have been able to save so many animals that he didn't by virtue of the fact that he didn't get there in time.

PRYOR: I think we're going to run out of time on this. Also I have so many more questions that I think I'll probably be bothering you again soon.

BEARD: That's alright. (short interlude missing).....Fairfax County in the state of Virginia. We had 317 commercial dairy farms. One of the reasons why I was allowed to come back to my home county was because I specialized in dairy science at college and got a Bacheolor of Science in Dairy Science. I hadn't practiced any of that in the counties I had been in before I came back to Fairfax County to work, because they weren't dairy counties. They were truck crop counties. We had Dairy Herd Improvement Association in which we kept rather detailed records of the production and the feed and the cost of these herds in the County. The center of this dairy industry was up in that neighborhood. Another

BEARD: thing, it was the heart of the vocational agriculture taught in high-school, the only school like that in the County and one of the first that ever was in the state of Virginia. This school was built in 1919-1920. The law they enacted, the Smith-Hughs Program was the.. ....

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